CHAPTER X.

MYSORE IN MODERN LITERATURE.

Early references in English Literature.

THOUGH Mysore is among the most beautiful Indian States and Bangalore the Queen of Indian cities, the immortality acquired by modern literary associations of places in Mysore has an interest which is not unworthy of being noted here. Numerous literary associations have been forged within recent centuries with Indian places. Our knowledge of Bombay should be regarded incomplete if we did not know of Rudyard Kipling having been born in it, and of Calcutta equally imperfect if we did not remember it as Thackeray's birthplace. The habit of reading may induce us sometimes to look at or admire nothing without calling to mind some literary description of it. It is not merely that, enjoying the bracing climate of the Nilgiris, we may involuntarily utter Tennyson's reference to "the half-English Nilgherry air," but that we are generally lifted up by literary associations into a rich imaginative vision of things before us for the lack of which we but grope blindly. Who can visit the beautiful spots of Italy without remembering the associated lines in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*?

The Mysore State attracted the attention of English writers, principally by the rise of Haidar Āli. Haidar Āli struck terror in the minds of all and his name created a sensation in England.

> "I no more trouble my head about who's in or who's out than I do about Hyder Ally or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker."

The political relations of the British settlement at Fort St. George with the court of Haidar Āli were of the most momentous character at the time, and the embassy of

Schwartz, George Gray and others (1780) brought back romantic accounts of Haidar's rule.

When in 1799, on the death of Tīpu, the English took possession of Mysore, Dr. Francis Buchanan was deputed to report on the dominions of the Maharaja of Mysore. He proceeded from Madras, travelling through Conjeevaram, Vellore, Punganur and other places, and this same journey fell to the lot of Dr. John Leyden a few years later.

> Dreadful frown'd in martial pride
> A hundred Droogs from hill to hill.

Sir Walter Scott in weaving his story of *Surgeon's Daughter* picturing the reign of Haidar Āli, fixes the Begum Montreville as being in possession of a Mysore frontier hill-fort. Leyden had been appointed Surgeon to the Mysore Survey, and his letters mention to us a few exciting incidents in his wanderings in the Mysore country. He was to relieve speedily a sick official of his duties, but a river in flood lay across. He repaired to a reputed den of robbers and enforced their assistance to him. Three of them swam in the water holding between them a brass kettle on which Leyden was transported! In another part of the same journey he was dogged by a monstrous tiger for a distance of three miles. Adam Hartley in Scott's novel meets on his way from Madras to Mysore with a "Sādhu" who having suffered the shock of seeing his bride eaten up by a tiger on the wedding day, remained a melancholy recluse for life, though he had had the satisfaction of killing the offending tiger.

Like many another poet, Leyden was profoundly inspired by the event of Tīpu's death to burst into poetry, on the vanity of human wishes:—

> In Vishnu's Lotus-feet alone
> Confide! his power shall ne'er decay,
> When tumbles every earthly throne,
> And mortal glory fades away.

To quote the prose of Colonel Browning: "A few wretched houses remain where once was a great capital, and the ancient temple of Vishnu looks down, as if in mockery, on the ruins of the Muhammadan usurper." Sir Walter Scott tells us in his novel that Adam Hartley, arriving at Seringapatam, "consumed no time in viewing the temple of the celebrated Vishnoo, or in surveying the splendid gardens called Lallbaug which were the monument of Haidar's magnificence and now hold his mortal remains." Seringapatam was a beauty-spot. When Adam Hartley went to interview Haidar Alī, who was disguised as a learned priest, he passed through a grove of mango trees, through which an infant moon was twinkling faintly amid the murmur of waters, the sweet song of the nightingale, and the odours of the rose, yellow jasmine, orange and citron flowers and Persian narcissus. Seringapatam also forms the subject of a poem by Sir Henry Newbolt in which are the lines:—

> The sleep that Tippoo Sahib sleeps
> Heeds not the cry of man.

From Seringapatam, Adam Hartley in Scott's novel passes to Bangalore, referred to as "a fine and populous city," to an "encampment in a tope," "looking full on the gardens which Tippoo had created." In Bangalore Tīpu holds a durbar in which Haidar, disguised as a *fakir*, rises suddenly to chastise the son for his licentious conduct.

In Meadows Taylor's Novels.

The story of Tīpu attracted another famous novelist besides Sir Walter Scott, *viz.*, Colonel Meadows Taylor who endeavoured to give a picture of the times in his *Tippu Sultan*. Abdool Rhyman Khan, travelling from Hyderabad and passing through Adōni, Anantapur, and other places, halts at Nandidrug where the prison-house into which European prisoners were thrown reminds the

visitor of Haidar's terrible ways. The rock also was there from the top of which the offending captives were hurled down. The approach to Seringapatam lying "amidst groves of trees and surrounded by richly cultivated lands" is mentioned with animated pleasure.

In Leyden's Poems.

The most remarkable poem relating to Mysore is Leyden's *Dirge of Tippoo Sultan* from the Kannada. The glory of the capital cannot naturally escape description :—

> Girt by the Cauvery's holy stream,
> By circling walls in triple row,
> While deep between, with sullen gleam,
> The dreary moat out-spread below.

A short list is made of the notable personages who had defended the kingdom under Tīpu. Among them are Kummer, Sher Khan, Meer Saduk, Mira Hussein, Soobria Mutti, Bubber Jung, Khan Jehan Khan, Seid Saheb and Poornia.

> Pournia sprung from Brahma's line,
> Intrepid in the martial fray,
> Alike in council formed to shine :—
> How could our Sultan's power decay ?

Sir Walter Scott and Bangalore.

A personal link between Sir Walter Scott and Bangalore may be referred to here. The novelist's eldest son serving as an officer in the Hussars, was stationed at Bangalore from 1839 till his departure in 1846. We read of this son in Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*: "Sir Walter having unwisely exposed himself in a tiger hunt in August 1846, was, on his return to his quarters at Bangalore, smitten with fever which ended in liver disease. He was ordered to proceed to England, and died near the Cape of Good Hope on board the ship *Wellesley*, February the 8th 1847." In 1923, a corres-

pondent wrote in the columns of the *Madras Mail* about the agreeable social qualities and pleasant memories of the baronet. There is a memorial tablet to him in Trinity Church, Bangalore. He died without issue at the age of 45 and with him the baronetcy became extinct.

Some Prison Poems.

To the English of the Eighteenth century who suffered under the hands of Haidar Ali as his prisoners of war, Haidar, it would appear, seemed more cruel than his son Tipu. The prisons at Seringapatam and Bangalore were full of the English captured in the war which resulted in Colonel Baillie's defeat. Both these prisons were hideous examples of their kind, and the uniform cruelty exercised over the unfortunate men found expression in lines which will ever be recalled with mingled feelings of pity and sorrow. Over the prisoners themselves, life in them impressed itself "with all the force," it is said, "of a deep tragedy." The *Prison Song of Seringapatam*, apparently written by an inmate of that prison is well known.

Mysore Military Memoirs and Despatches.

Wilks' *History* and Buchanan-Hamilton's *Journey*, have already been mentioned. On the military history of Mysore many volumes have been written, some by those who took part in the three memorable wars. Of these, *Memoirs of the late war in Asia* is a contemporary account of the war and the treatment which English and Indian prisoners received at the hands of Haidar and Tipu in the prisons of Seringapatam and Bangalore. The authorship of this work has been attributed to Col. Alexander Reade who was Commissariat Officer during the last war with Tipu and was subsequently in charge of the Baramahal district. This was the gentleman under whom Sir Thomas Munro learnt work as a junior Revenue officer. A close study of these *Memoirs* shows that Reade could have contributed only a part of them, the rest being

accounts of the warfare collected by him from other persons engaged in it for inclusion in his publication. At the end of a long preface, he describes himself as "the compiler of these Memorandums." Captain Innes Munro's *A Narrative of the Military Operations* includes an account of the fighting on the Coromandel Coast against the combined forces of the French, Dutch and Haidar Āli from 1780 to 1784. It is in a series of letters in which are included "many useful cautions to young gentlemen destined for India." It was originally published in 1789 and dedicated to the Duke of Northumberland. In Gleig's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro* are included some notable letters throwing considerable light on the fighting of this period. Major Dirom's *Narrative of the Campaign* describes the war with Tīpu in 1792. It was published in 1793, being dedicated to Henry Dundas, one of the Secretaries of State at the time and one of the Commissioners for the Affairs of India. Among the illustrations in this work is an excellent one which gives a north-east view of Seringapatam, drawn by I. Smith, from a view taken on the spot, in which Tīpu's Palace, the Rāja's Palace, the Hindu Temple and the Muhammadan Mosque are clearly shown. Lieutenant Mackenzie's *Sketch of the war with Tippoo Sultan* (in two volumes) relates to the same period. It was published at Calcutta in 1793. A work of unique interest, published in 1794, is Home's *Select views in Mysore, the country of Tippoo Sultan*. Homes' drawings are famous and convey some idea of the impression produced by the "Glorious War" in which Lord Cornwallis, to whom the work is dedicated, distinguished himself. Among the more notable illustrations in it are an inside view of Tīpu's Palace in Bangalore Fort, a north view of Bangalore from the *Pettah*, a distant view of Savandurg, several views of Seringapatam, of which a west view of it from the middle of the river Cauvery is exquisitely done; and

a view of Haidar's tomb in the Lal-Bagh at Seringapatam. The history of the last war with Tīpu and some part of the subsequent history of Mysore may be read in the Wellington and Wellesley *Despatches*. In Major General Beatson's *Siege of Seringapatam* and Sir Alexander Allan's *Account of Campaign in Mysore* may be read in great detail the history of the warfare which ended in the fall of Tīpu and the conquest of Seringapatam in 1799. Beatson was Surveyor-General to the Army during the campaign and Sir Alexander Allan, Bart. was Deputy Quarter-Master-General with the Madras and Bengal Forces. A work entitled *Narrative Sketches of the conquest of Mysore*, printed in 1800, contains at the end a descriptive sketch of the storming of Seringapatam, as exhibited in the great historical picture painted by Sir Robert Ker Porter. The breach occupies the centre, and in it General Baird, surrounded by his staff, is seen prominently. The painting was executed upon a large scale, occupying 2550 sq. ft. of canvas, and contained several hundred figures, as large as life, with nearly twenty portraits of British Officers. Mr. Theodore Hook's *Life of Sir David Baird*, who led the storming party in 1799, partakes the character of a partisan publication, but is full of valuable information. Captain W. H. Wilkins' recently published (1912) *Life of Sir David Baird* is a more judicious and interesting record of the great General's career. The Rt. Hon. S. R. Lushington's *Life of General Lord Harris*, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army which captured Seringapatam, is another work which deserves special mention in this connection.

A picture of Krishna Rāja Wodeyar, III as he lived in the sixties of the last century will be found delineated in *Varieties of Viceregal Life* by Sir William Denison, K.C.B., Governor of Madras at the time. Mr. Lewin Bowring's *Eastern Experiences*, published in 1872, covers

the same period. Mr. Bowring's letters written to friends and relatives in England which are included in Mr. Bowring's book give sketches of the scenery in different parts of the State, particularly in the Malnād. Mr. Bowring's other work *Haidar Alī and Tīpu Sultan* is a readable volume in the *Rulers of India Series*, edited by the late Sir William Wilson Hunter. Among more recent works may be mentioned Mr. Rice's *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions* (1909), which gives a detailed account of the many interesting antiquities of the State and *Southern India, painted by Lady Lawley and described by F. E. Penny* (1914), a part of which, containing many pictures from life, is devoted to Mysore and its people.